

NEWS RELEASE

USDA Forest Service Santa Fe National Forest



For Immediate Release

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HIGHER LEVEL OF FIRE RESTRICTIONS FOR THE SANTA FE NATIONAL FOREST

(SANTA FE, NM)—“We continue to experience extreme fire danger in spite of the nice cloud build-up we see today” said Gilbert Zepeda, Santa Fe National Forest Supervisor, “As a public safety measure, we feel it is necessary to move into the next level of fire restrictions.” Stage II restrictions will take effect on Friday, June 4, 2004 at 12:01 a.m. (one minute after midnight).

Stage II Restrictions include prohibition of:

- Campfires, charcoal, coal or wood stoves (no campfires in developed campgrounds or in dispersed recreation areas);
- Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle or building;
- Possessing, discharging, or using any kind of firework or other pyrotechnic device;
- Using an explosive;
- Operating a chainsaw or other equipment powered by an internal combustion engine;
- Welding, or operating acetylene or other torch with open flame;
- Possess or use a motor vehicle off: Forest System Roads, Federal or state highways, or County roads within the Santa Fe National Forest. Except when parking in an area devoid of vegetation within 10 feet of the roadway; and except for parking overnight in developed campgrounds and at trailheads.

People are allowed to use pressurized liquid or gas stoves, lanterns, or space-heating devices provided such devices meet the fire underwriters’ specifications for safety, anywhere on the national forest.

There are no restrictions at this time in the Pecos Wilderness, San Pedro Parks Wilderness, or the Chama River Canyon Wilderness. Campfires are still allowed in the designated Wilderness areas. “We ask Wilderness campers to take extra precautions with their campfire and not leave the area until their campfire is cold to the touch,” said Zepeda. A reminder to all, the Cerro Grande Fire area remains under closure order issued in 2000.

“The weather outlook, although predicting some moisture through Friday, calls for increased wind activity and chances of dry lightning. Rainshowers would make a difference in the fine fuels (grasses), but the larger fuels (trees, logs and branches) are so dry at this point, it would take significant rainfall to get us out of extreme fire danger. With the fuel moisture this low, chances of fires igniting are greatly increased.” said Paul Orozco, Fire Management Officer, “We are fortunate to have additional fire crews, engines, fire prevention personnel and air support stationed throughout the Forest as a precaution.”

-more-

-add one-

“We are now looking ahead at the possibility of having to close portions of the Forest that would be most at risk, if conditions continue and if we start experiencing fires,” added Orozco.

Memorial Day weekend posed a challenge for Forest Service law enforcement officers and Fire Prevention personnel. 100 illegal fire citations were issued in the Santa Fe National Forest, mainly in the Pecos and Jemez area. “We can use everyone’s help in keeping our forest safe from wildfire,” said Gilbert Zepeda.

Additional fire information can be obtained at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/fire>. For other fire restrictions on public lands in the southwest, call toll free 1-877-864-6985. To report a fire, call (505) 438-7800.

NOTE TO MEDIA:

*Santa Fe N.F. includes national forest lands near Jemez, Cuba, Coyote, Gallina, Santa Fe, Los Alamos, Espanola, Pecos, Las Vegas and Mora .

There are 4 different stages (levels) of restriction/closures in response to Fire risk:

Stage I (1st Level)--No smoking outside of vehicles, or buildings. No open campfires outside of developed sites. No fireworks.

Stage II (2nd Level)--In addition to Stage I, adds prohibitions for explosives, chainsaw or other internal combustion engines (possibly during certain hours), welding, and using a motor vehicle off forest development roads; further restricts use of campfires.

Stage III (3rd Level)--The closure of specific areas of the Forest (as detailed in the Closure Order)

Stage IV (4th Level)--Full forest closures (as detailed in the Closure Order)

